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79

R E M A R K S
UPON THE
REPORT OF A PEACE.

[PRICE ONE SHILLING.]

30 Nov. 1782

R. E. M. A. R. K. S.

FROM THE

REPORT OF A BRANCH



[PRINTED BY THE SOCIETY]

REMARKS
UPON THE
REPORT OF A PEACE,

IN CONSEQUENCE OF

Mr. Secretary TOWNSHEND's Letter

TO THE

LORD MAYOR OF LONDON,
BANK DIRECTORS, &c.

BY THE AUTHOR OF THE

DEFENCE OF THE EARL OF SHELBURNE.

SECOND EDITION.

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R. E. M. A. R. S.

REPORT

REPORT OF A READER

IN CONNECTION WITH

THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

TO THE

LONDON



OF THE BOARD OF FRIENDS

SECOND EDITION

LONDON

Printed for A. S. & Co. by J. W. & Co. 1841

[Printed & Published by]

TO
BOTH HOUSES
OF
PARLIAMENT.

AMERICA has obtained her end, she *must* be independent. The object of France is in a great measure atchieved. She has torn away from England her valuable territories in the West, diminished her military character, outshone her in the arts of humanity, sunk her consequence among the nations, loaded her with near one hundred millions of additional debt, severed from her the

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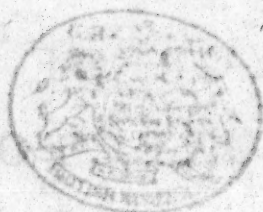
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R. E. M. A. R. S.

REPORT OF A READER

IN CONNECTION WITH

THE SOCIETY FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE RACE



LONDON

PRINTED BY THE EARL OF BATHURST

SECOND EDITION

J. O. W. O. R.

Printed for A. S. & Co. by J. O. W. O. R.

[Signed at Somerset, 1841]

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noblest

noblest continent that ever formed an appendage of empire, and all with a rapidness unprecedented in the annals of events. Still she has more to accomplish, but her allies pant for peace. America is said to have ordered her ambassador at Paris to accelerate pacification, and the report is credible. Not that I suspect America of ingratitude. France has been generous, and America is not insensible. But her distresses are grievous, and to rest a while must be her especial desire, as it is indeed the natural wish of each party. Negotiations are going forward, and the English parliament is prorogued for ten days. The nation is made acquainted with this event by the following letter to the Lord Mayor of London, the Bank Directors, &c.

To

To the Right Hon. the LORD MAYOR
of the CITY of LONDON.

My Lord,

HIS Majesty's ministers, anxious to prevent, as early as possible, the mischief too common resulting from speculations in the funds during the uncertain state of negotiations for peace with the powers at war, and which it is for the general honour and interest of all great powers to avoid, have thought it their duty to ask his Majesty's permission to communicate to you, for the information of the public, that the negotiations for peace, which are carrying on at Paris, are brought so far to a point, as to promise a decisive conclusion for peace or war, before the meeting of parliament, which will, on that account, be prorogued to the 5th of next month.

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I have likewise his Majesty's command to assure your Lordship, you will receive immediate notice of the issue.

I have the honour to be, &c.

T. TOWNSHEND.

Such is the letter—The most curious epistle, I will venture to say, that ever infused curiosity into the minds of mankind. It partakes of four natures, It is Lacedemonian, Hibernian, Venetian, and Carthaginian. It is Lacedemonian in brevity, and Hibernian in accuracy. Mr. Townshend is the right owner of these two virtues. No man can read the letter without having in the mind's eye, his collected reasoning, his well conducted climax, his decisive eloquence. The author lives in every line. Its Venetian and Punic merits claim the First Lord of the

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the Treasury for a parent. It is a principle in the government of Venice to debauch the people. Since the days of Claudius (who wrote a treatise upon hazard) there never was so effectual a summons to profligacy as this very letter. It sets the whole country a-gambling. All concerns for the state are enveloped in the zeal for betting. The minister may be his own master in this universal suspense, this general anxiety. He has intoxicated the whole nation; and, like a fordid courtezan, he may rifle the pockets, after debauching the senses of his victim. But if the Venetian qualities of the letter did not emphatically vouch for the Earl of Shelburne, its Punic subtilty puts its second parent out of all question.

This

This letter is above all kindred. Like Magna Charta, like the miracles of the apostles, like the incarnation, it stands by itself,—a supreme transaction,—unprecedented, original, and unassimilating !

I shall not follow the letter further. It has not escaped the wit even of the Common Council, and scarce an Alderman who has not hammered out some drole thing in contempt of the Secretary of State's epistle. The doubts entertained, that there has been any fact whatever for its foundation, are more worthy of consideration.

A sceptical genius has certainly an infinite resource in the Earl of Shelburne. There is a fecundity in his political rogueries which furnishes eternal food for speculation. His character
does

does unquestionably countenance a suspicion of fallacy in all transactions of which he is an agent, and the unlimited subtilty of the Noble Lord has induced the world to imagine that he has no hopes of a peace, that he wanted time to strengthen himself in parliament, and that he has adopted this expedient as the last desperate stratagem of ministerial chicanery. He has plagued Lord North to join him certainly. Through all his misfortunes and errors, I think there was something discoverable in Lord North, which militates against a belief that he could be so destitute of manliness, so politically despicable, so personally contemptible, as to join in support of the Earl of Shelburne's administration. A private gentleman would be kicked out of company for enduring half the vulgar abuse

abuse which Lord North bore from the Earl of Shelburne, shielded by the freedom of debate and the sanctity of situation. Taking it for granted, that no human being can be so much his own enemy as that Lord North should ever unite with the Earl of Shelburne, what is the world to think of this very Earl of Shelburne, who solicits his support? I will suppose, for argument's sake, that Lord North does not much exceed the Earl of Shelburne either in talents or virtues, what must be the sense of mankind as to the Noble Earl? Will the most phlegmatic man upon earth hesitate to pronounce him the most consummate of all wretched hypocrites, who for fourteen years reprobated every measure of Lord North—pronounced him in principle and practice the most pernicious minister that ever sat in the British cabinet—

yet

yet immediately crouches for support to him, when his own perfidy forces from the royal council the men, thro' whom alone he could ever gain admission to the king's cabinet.

What sophistry can palliate this proceeding? It is a direct and palpable insult to parliament. The House of Commons is pledged to the nation against the old ministry. Their Journals would at this hour exhibit a solemn proscription of the North administration, had the Earl of Surry made his motion. Personal delicacy much more than political judgment prevented him. But where is the necessity for a formal record in a transaction of yesterday? Every man remembers it. That ministry was overturned by the majority of the House of Commons, and the applause

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of the people sanctified the virtue of their representatives. I trust there are limits to political infamy. It is not in parliamentary baseness—it is not in civil turpitude that the same House of Commons can support an administration reprobated by themselves in terms so emphatical. But how stands it with those of the present cabinet, who *could not*, without covering themselves in an indelible disgrace, meet the old ministry in council? They have committed themselves long since. Every man in this country knows how they should act, and as their public declarations have furnished ample instruments of adjudication, I should wait for their public conduct if I did not feel, and was not convinced that the whole nation thinks as I do, that the Earl of Shelburne's *attempt* to call into power the men who stand virtually incapacitated by parlia-

parliament (and who as yet * have had

* Lord North's friends had, in consequence of a fresh overture from Lord Shelburne, a meeting three or four days since. That Jackall of every administration, that slave of slavery, that bawd of political prostitution, *the old Rat*, after confessing that Lord Shelburne was a minister in whom no person could confide, had the grossness to propose, notwithstanding, that they should go to the Cockpit. The proposal was instantly scouted by Lord North and his real friends. Lord Nugent is not the friend of any man. He has destroyed the political character of his once amiable son-in-law for ever. He corrupted him at the time of his marriage to such a degree, that Lord Temple said in the House of Commons in May 1775, ' That he hoped he should never differ in any thing from Lord North.' And yet he was his open enemy in less than two years. Who can wonder that he should degrade himself by being Lord Lieutenant of Ireland under the Earl of Shelburne. I do not impeach Lord Temple's heart, but I believe these facts will give no extravagant idea of the sagacity of his head.

the spirit to despise him) called, in the most forcible language, upon each of the right honorable personages I allude to, instantly to quit the administration.

To you, Mr. Pitt, I address myself in particular. I respect your talents, and I reverence your name. You said, that your whig colleagues were not bound to follow Mr. Fox, until there appeared to be in the minister a desertion of that system of principles which constituted the basis of the Rockingham administration. I affirm, that there cannot be a more palpable desertion of that system than in the efforts to recall the old servants of the crown into power. This event demonstrates every argument of Mr. Fox on the 9th of July. All his suspicions are established. Every prediction

diction is verified. Lord Shelburne
 solicits the political alliance of Lord
 North, and yet Mr. Pitt is chancellor
 of the exchequer. Glutton of mock
 power ! What shall remain for ma-
 turer years, for riper reason, if thy
 devouring youth shall swallow all,
 and leave no relish for the virtuous
 enjoyment of a future season ! I de-
 mand of you the justice due to your
 family, to your character, to your
 abilities. But if avarice has hardened
 your heart. If pomp and pageantry
 have infected your head. If you are
 dead to the noble incitements of *honest*
 ambition, this much I do prophecy,
 that you will have less to console
 you in the future misery which must
 infallibly await you, than any man
 living—You begun the world with
 the noblest prospects, and nothing
 could ruin you but yourself.

Strongly

Strongly then as the Earl of Shelburne's character induces a suspicion of all his actions, I profess myself, notwithstanding, entirely confident of his sincerity upon the present occasion. It is true, that his political dissolution must have succeeded a negative upon the address. And it is barely possible, that this negotiation for peace might be a bugbear merely to amuse the people, while he procured an accession of parliamentary support sufficient to combat his enemies. But it is perfectly improbable. Such a juggle upon the national understanding, such an insult upon the national dignity, is not in the whole scope of ministerial manœuvring, in the widest extent of political daring. The Earl of Shelburne knows too well that such an audacity must instantly dissolve all his power, and consign him

him to perpetual infamy. It is not an appeal to public pride, to national courage—No specious relation of the exorbitant terms demanded by the enemy that could secure him. No talents could vindicate, no sophistry could gloss over so monstrous an impudence. That he will meet Parliament with a peace I have no doubt, and to *that* chiefly shall the remainder of this address be devoted.

I have in another publication said, that the Earl of Shelburne would forget his own nature to procure a majority in Parliament ; and the peace which he has obtained (for I must take it for granted) completely verifies my assertion. Peace is not more the wish than it is the interest of this country ; and I affirm, that the man in the British empire who should not
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be happy in so blessed an event is the Earl of Shelburne, and *the Earl of Shelburne only.*

I assert, that the salvation of England must be the destruction of his reputation ; and that his character can only be secured in the ruin of his country. They are totally inconsistent, and not capable of being combined together by any possible modification of circumstances. If I am only a declaimer, let contempt follow me. If I prove, let me prove to some effect.

The retreat of Mr. Fox, the Duke of Portland, Lord Cavendish, Mr. Burke, &c. grew every day more popular. The Earl of Shelburne found the long recess inadequate to the end of procuring parliamentary support. He was active,
though

though ineffectual, and terrified at the thoughts of thus meeting the legislature as a war minister, he sues in earnest for peace; abandons all his schemes, plans, projects, principles; and sooner than part with power, he delivers himself up to the most aggravated circumstances of personal disgrace. This nation is indebted for a peace only to his desperate fortune. War was his object; and nothing but the paltry fear of losing his power could induce him to give this miserable country a cessation from expence and slaughter. Every man knows the vacancy, the coldness, the doubt, the diffidence, the indecision that prevailed in the Cabinet, during the last four months. This man's sense of pride, and that man's sense of shame. The fear of ridicule, the dread of infamy. Never was assembly so agitated

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tated by strange and contradictory emotions. To quiet this insurrection of the mind, the Earl of Shelburne yields at length to peace *, as the last desperate expedient of preserving his power.

If

* That war was his object, and that peace is only an instrument of influence, I believe no man doubts. Several offers of German troops were made in the course of the summer to General Conway. German troops and American war were synonymous terms to the General. The very sound threw him into a hectic. Upon recovering himself he always sent the applicants to Lord Shelburne. No offer was rejected. The pitiful craft of adopting private hints was carefully attended to, and General Faucitt is now recruiting in Lower Germany. No minister, but a blunderer like Lord Shelburne, could send to Lower Germany for troops. The only military magazine is Upper Germany. I

speak

If this poor country gets a peace, she owes that best of blessings to the administration which begun in April and ended in July. Human skill (without bribing the councils of the enemy) cannot accomplish the peace of England by any other means than those pointed out by Mr. Fox. The world is at this moment ignorant of the terms, yet I will take

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 speak from authority, when I say that he cannot get a thousand men from Hesse Cassel. The Duke of Brunswick detests the English minister, and he is just as unable as unwilling to furnish troops for this country. Anspach cannot spare three hundred men, and perhaps he may procure a few recruits in Hannau, half of whom will desert before they can be shipped for England. Thus stands the Earl of Shelburne as to German allies and continental resources. Yet he has talked of carrying on the war in boasting language.

upon me to assert, that peace cannot be procured otherwise than by the adoption of the doctrines of that minister whom Lord Shelburne forced from the service of his king.

This country has derived more constitutional benefit, more national felicity, from that short ministry of three months, than from all the administrations of the last twenty years conjointly. The lamentable misfortune of its dissolution is felt more forcibly every day. All the world confessed its virtue and wisdom. One of the ablest men in Europe, and, from partial motives, its direct enemy*, acknowledged that England was never governed by so great an administration.

* Mr. Flood.

Yet this tower of strength, this fabric of beauty, this temple of constitutional soundness was demolished at once by the detestable avarice, for I cannot dignify his guilt by calling it the ambition of the Earl of Shelburne. It was an avarice of the most fordid quality, of power and emolument, paltry, pitiful, and pernicious. Judge of him by his deeds. He dares not come to parliament after the events of this week without a peace. It is not in human boldness that he should. And what will mankind think of him when he comes into parliament to ratify the terms which Mr. Fox pronounced five months ago, as indispensable to the peace of England, and which this moon-calf minister reprobated at the very same moment. If, in private life, a private man were to perpetrate an act of this kind; if he were to hold up the art and the artist as obnoxious and abominable; if
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by placing himself exactly in his situation, he were to plunder the artist of his fame, and rob him of the profits of his genius, would not all the world in one voice cry out, that such a miscreant should be expelled the society of honest men? And is the first sphere of human action, the government of states to be so degraded, that all distinction between truth and falsehood, between honor and baseness, is to be utterly abolished!—Is vice to rise upon the ruin of virtue, supported on the one side by political wickedness, and upon the other by moral infamy!

Mr. Fox said no peace could be expected without giving independence to America. The Earl of Shelburne asserted, ‘ that
 ‘ the sun of Britain was set that day
 ‘ America was declared independent by
 ‘ the English legislature; that it must be
 ‘ wrote

‘ wrote in blood, and that the minister
 ‘ who recognized it must be a traitor.’

I take the fact of his making a peace for granted. He must bring it to Parliament, or his utter ruin follows upon the first day of meeting. I say then that he must give Independence to America. He must. He must. Come forth, thou minister of fatal prescience ! Come forth, thou prophet of thy own disgrace ! Come forth self-blasted, and be that very Traitor you foresaw !

Twice in his life, and only twice, has the Earl of Shelburne foretold events with a magical veracity. Upon the first day of the last sessions of parliament, he said in the House of Lords, and I am very accurate in his words :
 “ That if ever he should shew himself
 “ a rogue, he should shew himself an
 “ able

“ able rogue, and perform some act
 “ sufficiently important to bear up
 “ his perfidy, and give a sort of lustre
 “ to an act of turpitude.”

This is a principle of his Deity Machiavel. Great vices become a great minister. Let my reader reflect upon his conduct to his colleagues last July, and judge if he has not realized his doctrine most spiritedly. In the other respect, ‘that the minister who declared America independent must be a traitor,’ the fidelity of his prediction is wonderful, and for ought I know, as fate has placed her finger upon him, the whole sentence may be confirmed, “It *may* be wrote in blood,”—but not, I trust, in the blood of British soldiers and British sailors, who in this tide of times, throughout a disastrous and detestable war, have gallantly sup-

supported their own honor, although they could not from domestic mismanagement, and the accumulation of opposing calamities, secure their country from misfortune and disgrace.

It *may* be wrote in blood ! and therefore let the minister look to the terms of pacification. The peace of Paris has roused the nation into watchmen. They will not be sacrificed again. The first feature of negotiation is to ask more than is reasonable, and more than is expected. When we hear that France has demanded Canada, and to be placed in the East-Indies upon the very footing she stood before the last war : that Spain has demanded Gibraltar and Jamaica : that Holland expects a restitution of all her captured territories, and an indemnification for her expences during the war : we listen only

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to

to laugh. If the minister goes farther than acknowledging the independence, and equalizing concessions to France between the East and West Indies, let him indeed tremble, lest his evil genius has put words into his mouth, which may burst upon himself in images of horror.

It is his Majesty's greatest misfortune, that his favorite ministers have been most fatal to his personal honor. The Earl of Shelburne has, on the 11th of July, made the Royal lips speak in triumphant language of his successes in the West and East Indies, and he concludes with declaring to his parliament, *that he has the satisfaction to inform them, that he sees no reason which should induce him to accept of less than fair and reasonable terms of pacification.*

Military and commercial events have operated in our favor since the above period.

riod. Our trade has arrived without injury from the enemy. We have relieved Gibraltar. We have fought battles with honor and effect. Yet I affirm, that the Earl of Shelburne *cannot obtain fair and reasonable terms of pacification.* These words were knit into the Royal speech as an overture to that fatal opera, the American war. He has been unsuccessful in his efforts for parliamentary support during the recess, and enters now upon treaties for peace, as the last prop of expiring authority. I cannot mention that sentiment too often. Not content with overwhelming himself in disgrace, he involves his sovereign in a similar dilemma. The noble Earl may quibble upon, and Lord Ashburton may refine down, the expressions, *fair and reasonable terms of pacification.* But the people of England are no sophists. They understand plain language as well as the minister.

The interpretation of the Royal words is, that he will accept of no terms that shall soak up the interest, or impair the honor of the empire. The nation expects *this*, and woe be to the minister who attempts to deceive the nation at this crisis. I entirely forego the popular suspicion, that the Earl of Shelburne has no real expectation of peace,—that he has postponed the business of the empire only to collect together the scattered fragments of that mass of parliamentary knights errant, who are ready to fight for any master, and who have not lately appeared in the Campus Martius of corruption. I value the peace of the nation too much to speak of the events which must infallibly succeed the detection of such a plot. No—it is impossible so gross an outrage should be attempted.

The King must meet the Parliament with a peace, or he loses his
minister

minister the very first day of the sessions. Never was situation so dreadful as that of the Earl of Shelburne. If he makes a bad peace, he stamps a falsehood upon the royal person ; and the very best peace he can make cannot prevent the total annihilation of his own character. In what a lamentable predicament stand the people of England ! Their councils are led by a minister, who, to retain his own power, has no choice but between the ruin of his own character and the destruction of his country. Desperate alternative !

Yet surely the peace of this empire were cheaply purchased in the sacrifice of Lord Shelburne's personal fame, and he is the only man in England who should regret a peace ; for no
peace

peace can secure him from disgrace. Diamonds are cut in their own dust ; but there are other minerals that perish in their own poison. Mr. Yorke died to restore his honor, and he succeeded. So detached and singled out from every other political misfortune, is the misfortune of the Earl of Shelburne, that even a self-devotion could scarcely redeem his reputation. Yet, if I were in his condition, I should prefer the ethics of Passeran * to those of St. Paul.

I write at a moment when the public mind is agitated with uncommon emotion. The report is fastening it-

* An author of a book in defence of suicide.

self every hour, that the Earl of Shelburne postponed the Parliamet only to strengthen himself. I will not believe it. He knows it could not be endured. If his ministry were to survive the discovery of so unmatched an audacity a single day, an honest man might as well submit to the tyranny of Turkey as the boasted government of England.

In either case I portend his downfall. Peace destroys himself, and war destroys his country. Of all the high roads and winding alleys of British politics no passage is secure to the Earl of Shelburne. He must be undone. His last is one of his worst acts. Not the ease of solitude, nor all the graces of his amiable Countess, can

can supply a consolation Even to his retreat the execration of thousands of families shall follow him, destroyed and destroying at this moment by the public gambling which his letter to the city, as ridiculous in itself as abominable in its effects, has occasioned.

England has been often preserved by events that were miraculous, and Providence seems to have interposed in the present case. It is not more for the safety of the British constitution, than for the interest of virtue, that the Earl of Shelburne should stand in his present predicament. The justice of the Almighty never operates to so useful an example as when it makes the bad deeds of bad men the instruments of their own punishment. If trick were to prosper above truth, if falshood were to flourish upon the
ruins

ruins of fidelity, if the barriers between infamy and honor were to be demolished; if virtue were carted and expelled from human commerce, if vice were elevated to the golden tribunal, and mankind were led in her chains, what is there valuable in existence? It is for the honor of humanity that artifice and fraud should defeat themselves, and that the violation of private faith and public principle should be not only unsuccessful, but branded with general detestation.

Future ministers may learn from the Earl of Shelburne, that their best reliance should be in honorable dealing, and his fate may extend to statesmen that vulgar valuable truth, that fundamental principle of all good morals, "*honesty is the best policy.*"

The reader will pardon the liberty of my saying one word of myself. I

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write

write neither from private resentments, nor partial incitements. Public motives are my only impulse. I should abhor the man in little life, who acted upon the Earl of Shelburne's maxims. *His* guilt is magnified by the universality of its effects. The evil comes home to every man. If my humble, though earnest efforts, shall in any degree contribute to the demolition of that fatal system which he adopted and even now pants to accomplish, the consideration will make me happy: and it will be one of the best satisfactions of my life, to have assisted in plucking down the perishable wreaths of triumphant treachery.

Nov. 30, 1782.



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